SOME NEW BOOKS.

Spinoza.

We are indebted to Sir FREDERICK POLLOCK, Professor of Jurisprudence in Oxford, for a life of *Spinoza* (Macmillans). The purpose of this book is to set before English readers not only a biography but an account of Spinoza's philosophy. It aims at being understood by those who have not made a special study of the subject. Such a book was needed because there was no adequate English translation of Spinoza when the first edition of this work was published. The chief authority upon which the author has relied for Spinoza's life is a little narrative published at Amsterdam in 1705 by Johannes Colerus, a German minister of the Lutheran congregation at The Hague. What lends trustworthiness to this work is its freedom from the suspicion of being a designed panegyric. Colerus detested Spinoza's philosophy, but he was too honest to slander the philosopher's character as a man, or even to conceal his admiration for him. Another contemporary biography of Spinoza is attributed in the preface to one Lucas, there said to be a physician at The Hague, but nobody seems really to know anything about "Lucas," or whether any such person ever existed. Lucas writes like an ardent and rather confused eulogist, but there is reason to believe that he knew more about the earlier period of Spinoza's life than Colerus, and therefore must be accepted as a coördinate, and sometimes superior, authority, for that period, at any rate, notwithstanding his strong anti-clerical bias and extravagant manner of speech. As to the anecdotal reports about Spinoza preserved in the letters and diaries of various persons, Sir Frederick Pollock has used them with caution, but does not neglect them altogether.

I.

Baruch de Spinoza was born at Amsterdam on Nov. 24, 1632. His parents were members of the community of Jewish emigrants from Portugal and Spain which then had been established in the Netherlands for something more than a generation. Baruch's father was named Michael, and came from Figuera, near Coimbra, in Portugal. Before entering on Spinoza's life, the author directs attention to the isolated society in which he was brought up, the vicissitudes of its foundation and growth, and the tone of thought and instruction which prevailed in it. The results of the persecutions, banishments and forcible conversions which had earned for the sovereign of Spain the title of Catholic had been to leave in the Iberian Peninsula a large class of "new Christians," nominally converted Jews, who, in many cases, however, kept up in secret, from generation to generation, some remnant of Jewish usages. Their tendencies to covert persistence in the faith and customs of their fathers were watched by the Inquisition with an evil and sleepless eye. Toward the close of the sixteenth century it seemed as if the precarious state of the Maranos, as the unacknowledged Jews were called, was about to become hopeless. No sooner, however, was the independence of the Netherlands practically secured than the new Christians of Spain and Portugal began to look thither for a refuge. The first synagogue of Amsterdam was open in 1598. Ten years later the number of the colony had so much increased that a new synagogue was needed. In 1675, when the Jewish community of Amsterdam had reached the height of its prosperity, the present Portuguese synagogue was completed, amid the felicitations not only of Jewish but of Christian theologians and poets. Meanwhile, however, some years seem to have passed before the Jews acquired a distinct legal status. Even in Amsterdam mixed marriages were forbidden, and the Jews were once, if not often, threatened with the closing of their synagogue; there is ground for thinking that, in other parts of the Netherlands, they were not always sure of ever their personal liberty. It was not until 1619 that an ordinance was made by the States of Holland, whereby provision was made for the regular admission and government of the Jews. Thenceforward the Hebrew colony waxed and throve apace; we have still a living record of their prosperity in Rembrandt's grave and majestic portraits of Jewish merchants and rabbis. As to the state of education among the Jews of Amsterdam, it is evident that they were well provided with the appliances of literature and learning then current. The customary course of instruction, however, was almost, if not altogether, confined to the Hebrew language and literature, imparted through the medium of Spanish. At the age of 15 Spinoza had gone so far in the study of the Talmud as to be accounted one of his teacher's most promising pupils. In the advanced classes of the Amsterdam school he had the opportunity of mastering the writings of the golden age of modern Jewish learning, the commentaries of Maimonides and Ibn Ezra. Secular learning and accomplishments had to be sought in other quarters. The elements of Latin were imparted to Spinoza by a German master whose name is not known; he continued the study with Francis van den Ende, a physician as well as man of letters, whose reputation as a teacher was qualified by the suspicion that he taught his pupils free thinking. It is certain that Spinoza mastered Latin, considered as a medium of communication and instrument of thought. His quotations and allusions also demonstrate that he was fairly well at home in the Latin classics. His knowledge of Greek was more limited, and, by his own account, not critical; of modern languages he knew French and Italian, besides Portuguese and Spanish, and, perhaps, German. It seems that he always regarded Dutch as a foreign tongue, and, although, of course, he spoke it fluently, he wrote it only with difficulty. The fact helps us to comprehend the isolation in which the Hebrew community must have dwelt, even among well wishers. It was possibly through his intercourse with Van den Ende that Spinoza became acquainted with the writings of Giordano Bruno and Descartes. As for Descartes, no young man of that time with a philosophical turn of mind could help reading him. Our author deems it also possible that at some time, in the course of his early studies, Spinoza came by more systematic knowledge of the terms and method of the schoolmen than he has generally been credited with; it is certain, however, that he struck out his own method from a Cartesian and not scholastic starting point, and converted the terms to his own uses.

So much is known of Spinoza for the first twenty-three years of his life. Not long after he had attained his majority the elders of his people, who, it must be remembered, constituted a kind of state within a state, began to remark in him an unwonted freedom of discourse, and, possibly, some laxity in ceremonial observances. We have no trustworthy account of the incidents that led to Spinoza's rupture with the synagogue, but it is a fact that, in the early part of 1656, it was considered by the Jewish elders that action of a decided kind must be taken against him. During the short period which followed, Spinoza's life was aimed at by an unknown enemy, presumably some fanatic outrunning the zeal of his masters. This man set upon Spinoza with a dagger one evening as he was leaving the Portuguese synagogue, or, according to another account, the theatre. The blow only pierced his coat, but, warned by the attack that Amsterdam was no longer a safe place for him, he betook himself to the hospitality of a friend who dwelt a little way out of the city. Here, under the roof of heretics, who were themselves anathematized by the Synod of Dort, he learned the final decision of the Jewish congregation on the charge of heresy against himself. The sentence of excommunication was pronounced on July 27, 1656, in the Portuguese language, and laid upon him all the curses which are written in the law: "Cursed be he by day, and cursed be he by night; cursed be he in sleeping and cursed in waking, cursed in going out and cursed in coming in. The Lord shall not pardon him, the wrath and fury of the Lord shall henceforth be singled upon this man and there shall fall upon him all the curses which are written in the law. The Lord shall destroy his name under the sun and cut him off for his undoing from all the tribes of Israel, with all the curses of the firmament which are written in the book of the Lord." Thus was Baruch de Spinoza made an outcast from Israel and cut off from his own people and from his father's house. The excommunicated Jew became, as it were, a masterless man; he had no title by which he could call upon any Jew to stand by him or answer for him. If it is a good preparation for philosophy to be alone in the world, the needful discipline came upon Spinoza with terrible completeness. It is hardly possible for men at this time, either in Spinoza's country or our own, to realize the full effect of such a blow. Spinoza, however, never faltered under it. "This compels me," he said, on receiving the news, "to nothing which I should not otherwise have done." It would seem, therefore, that he held himself to have renounced the synagogue of his own motion rather than to have been driven from it. From this time forth, in any case, we have to think of Spinoza as driven from Amsterdam and from the associations of his youth. He himself marked the severance by disusing his Hebrew name Baruch and substituting for it the Latin equivalent Benedict. Only once more in his lifetime do we hear anything of dealings with his family. He became entitled upon the death of his father to share the inheritance with his two sisters. The sisters disputed his title, presumably under the belief that an excommunicated heretic could have no part in the estate of a faithful Israelite. Spinoza has left on record his opinion that, in a State where just laws are enforced, it is not only the right of every citizen, but his duty to the common weal, to resist injustice to himself, lest, peradventure, evil men should find profit in their evil doings. In his own case he acted on this principle. The Dutch administrators of the civil law proved to be just men, and Spinoza's claim to share with his sisters was made good. Having once established his rights, however, he did not choose to take any material advantage by them. When the partition came to be effected he gave up to his sisters everything except one bed.

II.

Spinoza was now dependent on his own work for a livelihood. In compliance with the rabbinical precept which commands every man to learn some handicraft, he had acquired the art of making and polishing lenses for optical instruments. Perhaps a desire to imitate Descartes, who, likewise, had made himself a practical optician, may have entered into Spinoza's motive. The art enabled him to earn an income sufficient for his limited wants, and a reputation for skill and knowledge of optics preceded his fame as a philosopher. The lenses made by him were sought after, and those left undisposed of at his death fetched a high price. It was ostensibly, indeed, as an optician that he made the acquaintance of Huygens and Leibnitz. It was believed by his friends that, but for his early death, he would have made some considerable contribution to optical science; as it was, the only work of the kind which he completed was a small treatise on the rainbow published at The Hague in 1687, and reprinted in our own time. It seems that Spinoza stayed with his friend, the Protestant dissenter who belonged to the community of Remonstrants, until about the end of 1660, when the two removed to a village near Leyden, then the headquarters of the sect. The Remonstrants were by this time practically tolerated, but had no regular clergy or public ministration. There could, therefore, be no outward evidence that a person living among them was not one of themselves. Hence the report that Spinoza had become a Christian naturally arose. In 1664 he moved to a suburb of The Hague, and six years later to The Hague itself, where he spent the rest of his life.

As early as 1663 we find Spinoza already sketching out the leading ideas of his metaphysical system, and intrusting his papers to a number of his younger friends at Amsterdam. These had formed a sort of philosophical club, at whose meetings Spinoza's manuscripts were read aloud and discussed. If any point remained obscure, a note would be made of the difficulty, and one of the company would write for an explanation. Such a letter is extant, written by Simon de Vries, a medical student of much promise, who conceived for Spinoza an intellectual attachment which grew into a warm friendship. He would willingly have shown his gratitude to his master by substantial benefactions; we are told of a gift of 2,000 florins offered by him to Spinoza and declined. The disciple died in his master's lifetime, yet not so unexpectedly but that he had time to form the design of making Spinoza his heir and to be persuaded from it by his friend's entreaties. De Vries had a brother living, and Spinoza pressed upon him the duty of thinking first of his own kindred. Against his own interests, the master prevailed with the disciple, and the bulk of the estate was left by De Vries to his brother, charged, however, with a sufficient annuity for Spinoza's maintenance. Even this was accepted only in part. The heir offered to fix the amount at 500 florins a year, but Spinoza maintained that it was too much and refused to take more than 300.

In 1663 Spinoza published the only work to which he ever set his name. He had prepared, it seems, a summary of the second part of Descartes's Principles of Philosophy for the use of a pupil whom he did not choose to make fully acquainted with his own opinions. Certain of Spinoza's friends desired him to treat the first part of Descartes's work in the same manner. This was done within a fortnight, and Spinoza was then urged to publish the book, which he agreed to do upon the condition that one of his friends would revise the language and explain in a preface that the author did not agree with all the Cartesian doctrines set forth. The task was undertaken by Dr. Meyer, and the original Latin version of the book appeared at Amsterdam in the year just named; in the following year a Dutch translation was issued by the same publisher. The book contained an exposition of two parts of Descartes's Principles, a fragment of a third part and an appendix of Metaphysical Reflections, professedly written from a Cartesian point of view, but giving many significant hints of the author's real divergence from Descartes. Spinoza himself attached no value to the publication, except as a means of preparing the way for more important things. "On this opportunity," he writes to a friend, "we may find some persons holding the highest places in my country," meaning the De Witts, who certainly were among his visitors when he was living near Leyden and afterward near The Hague, "who will be anxious to see those other writings which I acknowledge for my own, and will, therefore, take such order that I can give them to the world without danger of any inconvenience." Spinoza's hope was but partly fulfilled. The book on Descartes excited considerable attention, but the untoward course of public events was unfavorable to a liberal policy, and deprived Spinoza of the support for which he had looked. Sir Frederick Pollock here notes in passing two facts which are often overlooked, but which are established in this exposition of Descartes. One is that, if Spinoza had ever been a disciple of Descartes, he had ceased to be so at the time when he was giving lessons in philosophy to the pupil in question. The other is, he did not suppose the geometrical form of statement and argument to be an infallible method of arriving at philosophical truth; for in this work he made use of it to set forth opinions with which he himself did not agree and proofs with which he was not satisfied. The accuracy of Spinoza's manual, considered as an exposition of Descartes, is pronounced to be unquestioned. One of the criticisms made on Spinoza by modern writers is that he did not understand the fundamental proposition *cogito ergo sum*. As a matter of fact, in the book published in 1663 he gives precisely the same explanation of the proposition as is given by Descartes himself in the Meditation.

III.

The next notable event in Spinoza's life was the publication, in 1670, of the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, the full title of which, as Englished by a translator, ran as follows: "A treatise partly theological and partly political, containing some few discourses proving that the liberty of philosophizing (that is, making use of natural reason) may be allowed without any prejudice to piety or to the peace of any commonwealth, and that the loss of public peace and religion itself must necessarily follow where such a liberty of reasoning is taken away." Even in the United Provinces it was thought needful to issue the book without the name of the author, and under that of a fictitious printer at Hamburg. Even under the Protestant Government, which was reputed, and which, in truth, was the most liberal in such matters, freedom of conscience was confined within pretty narrow bounds. The tone and form of the treatise are conciliatory, but the scope of the book is political and practical. The final thesis to which all its apparatus of criticism leads up is that "in a free commonwealth it should be lawful for every man to think what he will and speak what he thinks," a proposition which, with due reservations in behalf of decency and civil order, reservations not neglected by Spinoza, is now commonly accepted in the greater part of the civilized world. To our modern eyes the conclusion itself looks far less bold than the arguments by which Spinoza upheld it. In order to gain his desired foundation for the freedom of speculative opinion he plunges into an investigation of the nature of philosophy, the principles of Scriptural interpretation, and the true provinces of theology and philosophy, anticipating with wonderful grasp and insight almost every principle, and not a few of the results of the school of historical criticism which has arisen within the last two or three generations, a school which, through Lessing and his circle, is connected by direct descent with Spinoza. The *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* also bears a testimony of unsurpassed power to the truth that conduct does not depend on speculation, a truth which, though exemplified abundantly by all generations of men, is still unfamiliar and unwelcome. Nor was this the only provocation which he gave to the storm of polemics that burst upon him. We have said that, while advocating freedom of thought and speech, Spinoza does not omit the necessary reservations in favor of the civil power; not only does he make them, but he makes them so ample that he has been charged by some of his modern censors with deifying brute force. He appeals from the churches to the State as representing the worldly common sense of the lay mind. He looks to an enlightened civil magistrate to deliver men from the clamor of anathemas, almost as a Hindu heretic, vexed by the Brahmans, may look to the impartial secular arm of the British Government. As Matthew Arnold has pointed out in an essay on the subject, what Spinoza did was to issue "a fervent appeal to the State to save us from the untoward generation of metaphysical Article-makers." As it happened, the generation of Article-makers was, in 1670, mighty in the Netherlands and still pretty fresh from the exercise of their functions at the Synod of Dort. If there is anything that ecclesiastical dogmatists of all parties are united in hating with a perfect hatred, it is the Erastian view of the relation of the State to religious differences. Accordingly, in 1671, the Dutch Synods addressed a complaint to the States-General concerning the printing and publishing of divers "Socinian and blasphemous books," among which the famous book of Hobbes, called "Leviathan" and Spinoza's "*Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*" were included. Three years later effect was given to this complaint by a formal prohibition of the latter work, which, either in anticipation of such a measure, or in order to obtain a sale in Catholic lands, had been already issued in a second edition with false title pages, as if it were a work on medicine or history. Rome was not far behind the Reform churches in diligence. The Theologico-Political tractate was soon put on the Index, and still holds its place in the mixed company of that catalogue. The celebrity, however, which came to Spinoza by reason of this publication was not altogether of a disagreeable kind. When his treatise had been some three years before the world, he was invited by the Elector Palatine to occupy the chair of philosophy at Heidelberg, but, as he believed it would be difficult to make known his opinions without disturbing the established religion of the Palatinate, he declined the invitation.

The call to Heidelberg was in 1673. The regrettable events which had taken place in the Netherlands during the previous year belong to general history. The war of aggression undertaken by Louis XIV. had engendered in the Dutch commonwealth a passionate panic that let loose the worst excesses of domestic faction, and the brothers De Witt, after spending their lives in the service of their country, were massacred by a frantic mob at The Hague. Spinoza had been the friend of John De Witt, had accepted a small pension from him, and is said to have been consulted by him in affairs of State. By his friend's murder he was moved as by no other event in his life. So much was his wonted self-control shaken that he was hardly restrained from expressing his indignation in public, at the risk of his head. Meanwhile Spinoza had been working at the Ethics, and, before the end of 1674, manuscript copies of the finished work were in the hands of some of his friends. About the end of July, 1675, he made an excursion to Amsterdam to arrange for the publication of the book. What befell him there is recounted in a letter to Oldenburg: "While I was busy with this, the report was spread everywhere that a certain book of mine was in the press wherein I endeavored to show that there was no God. Whereupon certain theologians, themselves, perhaps, the authors of the report, took occasion to complain of me to the Prince and the magistrates; moreover, the stupid Cartesians, being supposed to side with me and desiring to free themselves of that suspicion, were diligent in the execration of my doctrines and writings. Having knowledge of these matters from trustworthy persons, who, likewise, told me that the theologians were laying plots against me on all sides, I determined to put off the publication until I could see the issue of the affair." The result was that nothing more was done about the publishing of the Ethics in Spinoza's lifetime. He did not choose to be vexed with the petty warfare of clerical controversy, and he must have felt the assurance that his work would live, though he could scarcely have foreseen the splendor with which it would shine forth after a period of eclipse, giving up its hidden treasures of light and vital fire to inform the philosophy and poetry of a mighty nation.

IV.

In the autumn of 1676 an incident occurred which was afterward so successfully minimized by the person chiefly concerned that it has been restored to its due importance only by the work of a modern scholar. We refer to the fact that Leibnitz spent some time at Amsterdam, and visited Spinoza. His own philosophical opinions were then by no means definitely settled, nor were they until nearly ten years later. He was dissatisfied with Cartesianism, and in search of new light. When he was ready with his matured system, which was anti-Cartesian and anti-Spinozist, and aimed at the reconciliation of religion and science, he spoke of Spinoza in a tone of polemic opposition, though, to the last, he thought highly enough of that philosopher's powers to consider it not the least of his own merits to have discovered the effectual antidote to Spinozism. There is now no doubt that in 1676 he was powerfully attracted by what he knew of Spinoza. Subsequently he chose to represent his conversations with him as having consisted of ordinary talk on public affairs, in the course of which he said Spinoza had told him some pretty good stories. As a matter of fact, Leibnitz talked philosophy with Spinoza, discussed the Cartesian proof of the existence of God and propounded an amended one of his own, which did not, at first, satisfy Spinoza. Leibnitz then wrote down the proof, and showed it in writing to Spinoza, who, according to a note made by Leibnitz himself, finally admitted its validity. This shows much more than curiosity on Leibnitz's part. There is, indeed, reason to think that the real object of Leibnitz's stay in Holland was none other than to make Spinoza's acquaintance. His friendly attitude toward Spinoza was unchanged during the next few years, though he was naturally reserved, both in public utterances and in writing to persons too orthodox to be trusted with much sympathy for notorious heretics. The subsequent reaction against Spinozism, which started from dissatisfaction with Spinoza's rejection of final causes, passed through a marked Platonic phase, and then took an Aristotelian turn, before the doctrine of Monads was worked out, about the end of 1685, belongs to the history of Leibnitz's philosophy rather than Spinoza's.

Spinoza had now but little more of life before him. For many years he had suffered from consumption, to which he had inherited a tendency, and the disease had made alarming progress, aggravated, perhaps, by his work of glass polishing. On Sunday, Feb. 21, 1677, when he was not yet 45 years old, the end came almost suddenly. Spinoza had sent to Amsterdam for his friend and physician, Lewis Meyer; but on the Saturday he spent the afternoon in talk with his hosts as usual and on the Sunday he came down again in the morning and spoke with them before they went to the Lutheran Church at The Hague. They were so far from any immediate apprehension that they went out again in the afternoon, leaving him alone with Meyer. When they came home they found, to their surprise, that Spinoza was no longer alive. Dr. Meyer, the only person who was with him at the last, returned forthwith to Amsterdam. He is charged by Colerus with neglect of duty and rapacity, or, in plain terms, with making booty of a silver-handled knife and the loose money in the room. The author of the book before us deems this so grossly improbable that he disregards it. Colerus, an almost fanatical Lutheran, may not have been sorry to compensate himself for the admiration which his native honesty compelled him to yield to Spinoza's character by giving currency to a piece of malignant gossip about a friend of Spinoza's, known or suspected to share Spinoza's opinions, and who, as a person only coming incidentally into the story, had no particular claim to be treated with justice. Credit must be given to Colerus, on the other hand, for his downright contradiction of the tales concerning Spinoza's deathbed, which were circulated, it seems, by persons who thought it would tend to edification, to represent Spinoza as the blustering infidel of popular orthodox polemics who is invariably assailed by doubt and disquietude in his last moments, and as invariably strives to disguise them with feeble bravado.

Spinoza left behind him but a scanty estate, some thirty or forty volumes, a few engravings, the tools of his trade and a certain number of finished lenses, which last, as we have said, fetched a good price; besides these, a modest list of personal effects; in all, so little more than would cover debts and expenses that his surviving sister, who at first was disposed to assert her rights, concluded that the inheritance was not worth having. Spinoza, however, had one precious legacy to dispose of, the desk containing his letters and unpublished works. A friend of his had been charged to convey this, after Spinoza's death, to a publisher at Amsterdam. The trust was faithfully executed, and the *Opera Posthuma* appeared in the course of the same twelvemonth, but without the author's full name. In the following year, the States of Holland and West Friesland, being satisfied that the book entitled B. D. S. Opera Posthuma "labefactated" various essential articles of the faith, and "vilipended the authority of miracles," expressed "the highest indignation" at the disseminating thereof, declared it profane, atheistic and blasphemous, and forbade printing, selling and dealing in it, on pain of their high displeasure. The framers of this enactment earned a permanent remembrance for their words, though not quite as they desired. Instead of their ordinance extinguishing Spinoza's ethics, the book has preserved the memory of the ordinance.

Sir Frederick Pollock proceeds to tell us something of Spinoza's manner of daily life and outward habits. The effect of the details recounted by Colerus is to show us a man who was led to a retired life by choice and circumstance, not by ostentation; to an almost incredible frugality by reasons of health and economy, not by ascetic pride; a man who could be free-spoken, and who was of good will toward all sorts of men, but who would be dependent on none. His living and diet were of the simplest, his expenses amounting, sometimes, only to a few pence for a whole day. He kept down his expenses in this manner chiefly, if not wholly, in order to keep them within his means; just making both ends meet, as he would say of himself, like a snake with its tail in its mouth. His means remained slender to the last, because he did not choose to live on patronage, and the studies to which he devoted the best of his mind had even less bread-winning power at that time than they have now. It is reported that Spinoza on hearing that a man who owed him two hundred florins had become bankrupt, said with a smile, "I must retrench my allowance to make up for this little matter; at this price, one buys equanimity." The truth is that Spinoza lived in a retirement which at times might be called solitude; when absorbed in work he would hardly leave his chamber for many days together; once he did not leave his house for three months. If on these occasions, however, he chose to be alone, it was not that he loved solitude for its own sake. He had none of the pride and arrogance which fancies that the way to show superior knowledge is to disdain the common intercourse of mankind. There was no touch of philanthropy in the retirement from the world which he now and then imposed upon himself. Besides keeping up a not inconsiderable correspondence, Spinoza visited and was visited by not a few men of letters and learning. There was a time, as may be gathered by his own statements, when their civilities left him few hours to call his own. Spinoza was not a man to limit his converse to scholars; he knew how to win the esteem and affection of the simple folk of the household in which he dwelt. He talked freely and familiarly with his hosts, the Van der Spijcks, and would counsel their children to good behavior and obedience. Bold as he was in speculative thought and detached in his own person from all sects and doctrines, Spinoza was no furious iconoclast in private life. He did not seek to make nominal proselytes, who would have been neither the wiser nor the happier for their conversion, and, when the good woman of the house attacked him with a point-blank question as to the sufficiency of her religion for salvation, he answered that her religion was good if it led her to a good life, and she had no need to seek further.

V.

What is the relation of Spinoza to modern thought? An answer to this question occupies some thirty pages of the present biography. In the opinion of Sir Frederick Pollock, we should scarcely go beyond the truth in saying, with Auerbach, one of those who in our own time have done most to make the philosopher's work better known, that Spinoza's mind has fed the thoughts of two centuries. It is true that there has never been a Spinozist school, as there has been a Cartesian and a Kantist school. The strength of Spinozism is not in the system considered as such, but in its method and habit of life. Hostile critics have attacked the system ever since it was made known, but, even when they are successful, the spirit of the system illumes them. Not only will the spirit of Spinozism not be driven from philosophy, but it works its way into regions where formal philosophy is unwelcome or unknown. Religion and poetry become its carriers unawares, and our author deems it not too fanciful to trace its presence even in the fine arts. In truth, the history of Spinoza's philosophy is interwoven with the general history of culture. What were Spinoza's theological [illegible]? The outcome of a chapter devoted to the su[illegible] that we are able to say with reas[illegible] what the God of Spinoza is not. He is free, but not exercising choice; for all his works are necessary, and the law of their necessity is the law of his own being. His acts do not spring from design; where there is no choice there can be no deliberation; and a being which embraces the universe is sufficient to itself. He is not a moral being in the sense of having preferences; for, with respect to God, all things are perfect in their kind. Even understanding and will cannot be said to belong to his nature. In short, the God of Spinoza is not the personal God often said to be required by the innate religious sentiment of men. The speculative point of his heterodoxy is that he will not call God exclusively or eminently a thinking being. To say that God is a spirit is, in Spinoza's view, just as inadequate and misleading as to say that man is a spirit. Man is a thinking being, but he is also a corporeal or extended being; and thought is only one of the incident attributes of God. Sir Frederick Pollock would leave those to whom names are important to settle as best they can by what name Spinoza's doctrine shall be called. Most people call it pantheism. There is no objection to this appellation, except that pantheism is so vague a term as to be applicable to theories diametrically opposite in their bearing on the conduct of life, and very widely different in their purely philosophical foundation. For example, the Hindoo philosophers of the orthodox Brahmanical school, are, in a general way, pantheists, and are commonly so named. But they hold that all finite existence is an illusion, and life mere vexation and mistake, a blunder or sorry jest of the Absolute, a view which Christian schools developing Christian philosophy in a pantheistic direction have once and again approached. Spinoza holds nothing of the kind. Let us glance next at Spinoza's utterances touching the particular revelations on which the claims of Judaism and Christianity are made to stand. He seems to have regarded so-called revelations as the manifestations of a particular kind of human genius, the disclosures of moral truths by an insight natural in its presence and operation, but occurring only in a few men. Apparently, he looked on Jesus as a man of transcendent and unique moral genius, standing out above Moses and the prophets in some such way as Moses was conceived by the Jewish doctors to stand above all other prophets. Spinoza did not regard Jesus as otherwise of a different mould from mortal men. The mysteries propounded by Christian theologians appeared to him scarcely to deserve express contradiction. They were not so much untrue as unintelligible. These opinions of Christ's office and character were, naturally, unacceptable, even to moderately orthodox readers at the time of their utterance. It is needless, indeed, to dilate on the wonderfully modern character of Spinoza's criticism; it speaks for itself. As regards the practical problem of religion considered as a guide of life, Spinoza seems to make a distinction, as Plato did, between philosophers and the majority. For the philosopher, religion is acquiescence in the order of nature, with the delight in knowledge thereby engendered, and in living a righteous life at the bidding of reason. Questions about particular revelations and supernatural narratives are, for the philosopher, nothing else than historical and critical questions, of more or less interest in themselves, but not affecting the conduct of life. God and the world stand sure for him without miracles or prophecies. For the majority, on the other hand, religion is obedience to a revealed rule, a rule which can and ought to be reduced to the simplest terms, and almost or entirely freed from requirements of belief in specific supernatural events. It is pretty clear that Spinoza was not only describing what he deemed practicable for his own time, but believed would be practicable for all time.

VI.

With regard to the reception of Spinoza's work by the larger world of European thought, the present biographer considers it quite possible to exaggerate the neglect of it which prevailed for about a century after his death. Spinoza was rejected, but never forgotten, and rejected not so much because his ideas were wrongly apprehended as because few of his readers were educated up to the point of tolerating them. The rejection, however, was complete. Spinoza was, for the time, thrown clean out of the stream of European speculation, and philosophers in all countries went their way without taking any serious account of him. A variety of circumstances combined to produce this result. First and most obvious was the enmity of orthodox theologians of all denominations. In the second place, Spinoza had also incurred the hatred of the philosophical party, which, itself recently under the ban of the churches, had now won for itself a respectable position, and in many seats of learning was supreme. The Cartesians could never forgive Spinoza for his independence. To have improved on Descartes and gone the length of openly contradicting him was, in their eyes, the worst heresy of all. Leibnitz was certainly capable of understanding Spinoza, and he had made, as we have seen, a careful study of Spinoza's work. He gradually passed, however, from regarding Spinoza as a possible master or ally to regarding him as a dangerous enemy. The English philosophical school grew up in perfect independence of Spinoza's teaching. Locke, Berkeley and Hume all make some little mention of Spinoza, but in every case it is so slight as to show that they have never thought of him as a writer to be seriously considered. Bayle, in his Dictionary, gave to Spinoza a long article which is a curious mixture of anecdote, gossip and criticism. The alleged affinities of Spinozism with other ancient and modern systems, including Sufism and Chinese Buddhism, are traced with an enormous display of learning. Spinoza is called an atheist all through, and the philosophy of the Opera Posthuma is described as an absurd and monstrous theory, contradicting self-evident truths. Condillac in 1749 treated Spinoza as a dogmatic trifler who deceived himself with an unintelligible scholastic jargon. Voltaire spoke of Spinoza's person with high respect, but, in the criticism of his philosophy, went, in the main, with Bayle. There is pretty strong evidence that Montesquieu had read the Opera Posthuma, but he never once mentions Spinoza by name. While Voltaire, however, and the encyclopædist were still at the head of European thought, and chose to take for granted that Spinoza might be left alone as an enthusiast who had the merit of being a virtuous heretic and odious to orthodox authorities, but philosophically was quite hopeless, a movement had begun in Germany which was to give him his true place. Sir Frederick Pollock thinks that, if a date is to be fixed for the birth of modern Spinozism, it must be Lessing's conversation with Jacobi in 1780. Many years before that time, however, Lessing had been in correspondence with Moses Mendelssohn about Spinoza, and had thoroughly assimilated the latter's ideas. It is clear, nevertheless, that, while Lessing had carefully studied Spinoza, and understood him better than many later philosophers and critics, he never fully accepted Spinoza's theory as applicable to the theory of human nature and the conduct of life. This appears from the indications, unsystematic as they are, of Lessing's philosophical opinions. On the other hand, his intellectual sympathies were all with Spinoza, both as against the common orthodox denunciation of that philosopher and as against the half-intelligent criticism of the free-thinking French school. Scarcely had some ten or twelve years elapsed after Lessing's death when the tone of educated German society with regard to Spinoza underwent a complete change. Kant, indeed, was unaffected by the change, but for Goethe, as for Lessing, Spinoza was a living and eloquent guide. Goethe was not altogether in speculative agreement with him, but he assimilated, refashioned and propagated his ideas. The influence of Spinoza on his mind is no matter of conjecture; it is avowed by Goethe himself. "If I had to name the book," he wrote, "that of all I know agrees best with what I know of nature, I should name the Ethics. I hold more and more firmly to worshiping God with this so-called atheist and [illegible] leave to you and your allies everything [illegible] which you [illegible], as you needs must, the [illegible] of religion." He returned again and again to Spinoza for spiritual light and [illegible], and the Ethics continued to be the companion of his old age. In manifold ways the place filled by Spinoza in thought makes itself known in Goethe's writings.

The work of tracing Spinoza's influence down to the present time would need a volume to itself. Novalis, Schleiermacher and Heine are mentioned as among the German writers who, on divers occasions, have celebrated Spinoza's memory. Heine, in particular, has given to him some of his most charming pages. Auerbach, the translator of Spinoza's works, stands in the first rank of German novelists. At least one of his books carries on the face of it the purpose of showing the value of Spinoza's philosophy considered as a work in view of life. In philosophy, although Kant remained, as we have said, a stranger to him, Spinozism was largely taken up by the latter's successors. It is evident that Fichte studied Spinoza and felt his power. Hegel and Schelling both spoke of Spinoza with high admiration. To be a philosopher, said Hegel, you must first be a Spinozist; if you have not Spinozism, you have no philosophy at all. When Schelling and Hegel, however, had occasion, in expounding their own systems, to show how much they had improved on Spinoza, they not only became critical, but their criticism was hardly respectful. Nevertheless, it was admitted by them that Spinoza was the founder of modern philosophy, and this acknowledgment has been repeated by the general voice of German criticism ever since. One school, it is true, regards Spinoza with considerably less favor. This is the school of pessimism founded by Schopenhauer, and continued by Hartmann. Schopenhauer could not abide Spinoza, first, it seems, for being a Jew, and next, for being an optimist; the charge of optimism being established by the simple assertion that "pantheism is, essentially and necessarily, optimism. He makes an end of the Dutch philosopher in three or four pages of dashing criticism, calls him an unconscious materialist, among other names, and goes out of his way to cast an unquotable insult on Spinoza's race. Hartmann deals with Spinoza much more soberly, neither vituperates nor misrepresents him, and sometimes quotes him with approval. It is not to be expected, however, that those who find philosophical satisfaction in pessimism should have much sympathy for him. On the part of German scientists there is a tendency to increased appreciation of Spinoza. The physiologist Johannes Müller has testified that it is impossible to give any better account of the passions and of their relations to one another than that which Spinoza has set forth. Even more striking is the likeness between Spinoza's results and those reached in our time by workers who, like Wundt and Haeckel in Germany, and Taine in France, have come to psychological questions through physiology, or taken the precaution of informing their physiological judgment with competent physiological instruction. In Sir Frederick Pollock's opinion it may be safely affirmed that Spinoza tends more and more to become the philosopher of men of science.

VII.

The rehabilitation of Spinoza in Germany was yet new when Coleridge began to speak and write of him in England. The present appreciation of Spinoza in the last named country must be ascribed to Coleridge more than to any other one man. What Coleridge thought of Spinoza's importance as a philosopher may be gathered from a penciled note made by him in a copy of Schelling's philosophical works: "I believe, in the depths of my being, that the three great works since the introduction of Christianity are Bacon's 'Novum Organum,' Spinoza's 'Ethics' and Kant's 'Critique of the Pure Reason.'" Yet, while Coleridge admired Spinoza, both intellectually and morally, he could not fully accept his way of thinking. Crabb Robinson tells, in his diary, of an interview with Coleridge at which the latter spoke of the 'Ethics' as a book that was a gospel to him, explaining, at the same time, that he thought Spinoza's philosophy false. "For a very long time, indeed," wrote Coleridge, "I could not reconcile personality with infinity; and my head was with Spinoza, though my whole heart remained with Paul and John." At another time, according to Crabb Robinson, he said: "Spinoza's system has been demonstrated to be false, but only by that philosophy which has demonstrated the falsehood of all other philosophies. If his philosophy had commenced with an *it is* instead of an *I am*, Spinoza would be altogether true." There is no doubt that Coleridge's feeling about Spinoza was deep and constant, and we may be sure that, when he spoke of him to Wordsworth, it was with earnestness and eloquence. The author of this biography considers it not too fanciful to suppose that Coleridge's expositions of Spinoza may have counted for something in the speculative strain that runs through so much of Wordsworth's works, and thence, at one more remove, through the study and reverence of nature which most cultivated persons now accept as a matter of course, but which, in Wordsworth's time, was new, and, to not a few of his critics, appeared ridiculous. It is not here asserted that Wordsworth was a Spinozist, but merely that he may have derived from him, at second hand, his æsthetic temper. Whatever may have been thought of the influence on Wordsworth of Coleridge's modified Spinozism, it seems certain that Coleridge and Wordsworth so transformed the intellectual atmosphere of England as to make it possible that Spinoza should, in due time, be studied with care and intelligence even by those who did not go with him in his conclusions. Nearly half a century, however, passed from the time when Coleridge was overheard talking of the mysterious "Spy Nozy" before Spinoza was taken up in a serious way by English philosophical criticism. Among the first to draw attention to him were F. G. Maurice and G. H. Lewes. They naturally criticised Spinoza's system on widely different grounds, but they vied with each other in appreciating his moral and intellectual grandeur. Two other English writers, Matthew Arnold and Froude, made brilliant contributions to their countrymen's knowledge of the Dutch philosopher.

In France the study of Spinoza was taken up by the eclectic school of philosophical criticism of which Victor Cousin was the chief. The tendency of the school was hostile to Spinozism, as might have been expected from a philosophy which was, in effect, a revival of French Cartesianism, and was proud of its ancestor. But even then, if Spinoza met with but little sympathy, he met with careful discussion. Sir Frederick Pollock regards the introduction to Saisset's translation of his works as the best adverse criticism of Spinoza extant. At a later period Spinoza was handled by Paul Janet in a candid and impartial spirit, and by Renan with delicate insight and unrivalled eloquence. Taine, who stood at the head of the French scientific school, has given in his principal work, "De l'Intelligence," a discussion of the relations of mind and matter which is thoroughly in accordance with the spirit of Spinoza's doctrines. It is an interesting fact that Flaubert, the novelist, gave honor to Spinoza beyond all other philosophers. His letters abound in admiration of the Ethics as the work of a real man, and no mere schoolman.

The two hundredth anniversary of Spinoza's death, which fell in 1877, was fitly commemorated in Holland. Renan contributed a discourse, and Prof. Land of Leyden gave a special lecture on Spinoza's philosophy. Three years later, a bronze statue of Spinoza was unveiled and handed over to the municipal authorities of The Hague. The site of the house where he lodged has been identified, and the spot is now marked by a tablet inscribed with a short record.

M. W. H.

Unpublished Letters of Dean Swift.

In the latter part of 1897 Mr. GEORGE BIRKBECK HILL published in the *Atlantic Monthly* a number of letters written by Jonathan Swift to his friend Knightley Chetwode during the seventeen years which followed his appointment to the deanery of St. Patrick's. These letters, with some additions, and with voluminous notes, are now presented in a volume by the Frederick A. Stokes Company. The existence of this correspondence was known to John Forster when he planned to write Swift's life, but he died before reaching the date of the first of the letters. He speaks of them, however, in his preface as "the richest addition to the correspondence of this most masterly of English letter writers since it was first collected." By the Dean's earlier biographers nothing apparently was known of Knightley Chetwode's intimacy with Swift, neither is this Irish squire mentioned in the more recent life by Treik. Chetwode's name is found but once in the twenty-four volumes of Nichols's edition of Swift's works. He sprang from a family which, for some centuries, had its seat near Banbury, but he himself settled in Ireland, near Portarlington, Queen's county, about fifty miles southwest of Dublin, and built a house called Woodbrook, the main fabric of which still stands.

The earliest of the letters now first published in book form was written less than two months after Queen Anne's death had broken the whole scheme of Swift's life and sent him back to Ireland a soured and querulous man. He who had been hand in glove with great ministers of State was now to be bullied by Dublin's Archbishop and pelted by its mob. "I lay you a groat, Mr. Dean, I don't know you," said an Irishman to him after his fall, with whom, in the days of his prosperity, he had lived in the greatest intimacy. "I lay you a groat, my lord, I don't know you," Swift retorted to the same man some years later when the whirligig of time had brought him his vengeance, and Swift, as the author of the "Drapier Letters," had become the favorite, if not of the Crown, at all events, of the Irish people. Before those happier days came he had longed to shelter himself in obscurity. During the seven years which followed the accession of George I., he "continued," to use his own words, "in the greatest privacy. This manner of life," he added, "was not taken up out of any sort of affection, but merely to avoid giving offence and for fear of provoking party zeal." His correspondence with Chetwode covers the period of his downfall and dejection, and also that of his second elevation and haughty pride. It covers, too, the rapid growth of the terrible malady which, more than disappointed ambition, clouded his life. In the midst of his moody discontent and sufferings he shows the "fidelity and friendship" for which he was praised by one who knew him well. His advice and aid were, for many years, at Chetwode's service. Their friendship was at last dissolved in anger, but Mr. Hill is inclined to think that the chief blame for the rupture did not lie at Swift's door. It was an ugly suspicion which parted the two in the end. The squire of Woodbrook was a suspicious man, and Swift, on his side, was not an easy man to deal with.

In a letter dated October, 1724, there is a reference to the state of things at the University of Oxford which has led the editor to compile some interesting notes upon the subject. Swift had pointed out that "the discipline in Oxford is more remiss than here," meaning in Trinity College, Dublin, and he estimates that at the latter institution, "fifty pounds a year will entertain your son a commoner, on which conditions you will place him if you intend he shall be good for something." In a subsequent letter he says, "I am utterly against his being a gentleman commoner on other regards besides the expense; and I believe fifty pounds a year will maintain very well a creditable Pensioner." Mr. Hill reminds us that at Oxford, from the Restoration onward, discipline kept sinking and sinking till it reached its lowest depth of degradation toward the close of the eighteenth century. Swift, it is reported, once asked a young clergyman if he smoked. Being answered that he did not, "It is a sign," said Swift, "you were not bred in the University of Oxford. For drinking and smoking are the first rudiments of learning taught here. And in these arts no university in Europe can outdo them." Nevertheless, in his "Essay on Modern Education," he says that, though he "could add some hundred examples from his own observation of men who learnt nothing more at Oxford than to drink ale and smoke tobacco," there were others who made good use of their time there, "and were ready to celebrate and defend that course of education." In his essay on the "Fates of Clergymen," he thus described the course of an Oxford student who was destined to rise high in the Church: "He was never absent from prayers or lecture, nor once out of his college after Tom (the great Christ's Church bell) tolled. He spent every day ten hours in his closet in reading his courses, dozing, slipping papers or darning his stockings, which last he performed to admiration. He could be soberly drunk at the expense of others with college ale, and at those seasons was always most devout. He wore the same gown five years without draggling or tearing. He never once looked into a playbook or a poem. He never understood a jest or had the least conception of wit." A fellowship at Dublin differed, as Swift pointed out, "in some very important circumstances from most of those in either of the universities in England. It is obtained with great difficulty by reason of the number of candidates, the strict examination in many branches of learning and the regularity in life and manners."

There were, however, two sides to the picture. Hearne, writing at Oxford nineteen years before the date of Swift's letter, speaks ill of the Irish university: "The library of Trinity College in Dublin, where the noble study of Bishop Usher was placed, is quite neglected and in no order, so that 'tis perfectly useless; the provost and fellows of that college have no regard for books and learning." Toward the end of last century the library of Trinity, Dublin, was only opened "from 8 to 10 in the morning and from 11 to 1 at noon," while "no person was suffered, under any pretence, to take books away." On holidays it was closed. In Christ's Church, Oxford, the discipline does not seem to have been remiss under Dean Aldrich, who died in 1710. Hearne tells us that he (Aldrich) rose to 5 o'clock prayers in the morning, summer and winter, and visited the chambers of young gentlemen, on purpose to see that they employed their time in useful and commendable studies. He was a severe student himself, yet always free, open and facetious." On the other hand, Lord Chesterfield writing to Dr. Madden in 1749 about the University of Dublin, said: "Our two universities will do you no hurt, unless by their example; for I cannot believe that their present reputations will invite people in Ireland to send their sons there. The one (Cambridge) is sunk into the lowest obscurity; and the existence of Oxford would not be known if it were not for the treasonable spirit publicly avowed and often exerted there. The University of Dublin has this great advantage over ours: it is one compact body under the eye and authority of one head, who, if he be a good one, can enforce order and discipline, and establish the public exercises as he thinks proper." About a dozen years later there seems to have been a change. R. L. Edgeworth, who in 1761 entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a fellow commoner, says that "it was not the fashion in those days to plague fellow commoners with lectures." He mentions his "total neglect of study," and adds, "my father prudently removed me from Dublin to Oxford. Having entered Corpus Christi College, I applied assiduously not only to my studies under my excellent tutor, Mr. Russell, but also to the perusal of the best English writers, both in prose and verse." Russell was father of the Master of the Charterhouse, whom Thackeray has celebrated in Pendennis.

When Swift writes about a "gentleman commoner," he is applying to Dublin the term with which he had become familiar during his short residence in Oxford. The fellow commoner and pensioner of Dublin corresponded to the gentleman commoner and commoner of the English university, though in Worcester College, Oxford, the term "fellow commoner" was used. The gentlemen commoners whose showy gowns were often seen in Oxford during the fifties are now as extinct as the dodo. So lately as 1833 they still numbered one hundred and fifty. It appears that, even now, "in Dublin any one who chooses to spend his money foolishly can be a fellow commoner. He sits at the fellows' table, and is distinguished by some points of college costume. Above him in rank is the son of a peer." It was as a gentleman commoner that Gibbon, about thirty years after the date of Swift's letter, entered Magdalen College, Oxford. He dined with the fellows and was privileged to share in their 'dull and deep potations,' and to join in their conversation, as it stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal. At Christ's Church, Oxford, in 1769, "the expense of a commoner keeping the best company was near £200 a year; that of a gentleman commoner at least £250. At other colleges a commoner could have lived in decent comfort on £100."

In one of the latest of these letters Swift tells his friend, Chetwode: "I do not understand your son's fancy of leaving the university to study law under a teacher. I doubt not he is weary of his studies and wants to be in a new scene; I heard of a fellow some years ago who followed that practice of reading law, but I believe it was to lads who had never been at a university. I am ignorant of these schemes, and you must advise with some who are acquainted with them. I only know the old road of getting some good learning in a university, and, when young men are well grounded, then going to the Inns of Court." The editor quotes a supplementary remark on the same subject in Swift's "Letter to a Young Clergyman": "What a violent run there is among too many weak people against university education! Be firmly assured that the whole cry is made up by those who were either never sent to a college, or, through their irregularities and stupidity, never made the least improvement while they were there." The students of Dublin University he thus mentions in a letter to Pope: "You are as much known here as in England, and the university lads will crowd to kiss the hem of your garments." Whenever young Chetwode studied English law in 1727, he would have had to learn law Latin. For four years longer Latin was to remain the language of the records in the law courts. Blackstone in his Commentaries sighs over the change that was made when, by act of Parliament, English alone was to be thenceforth used. "The common people," he said, "were as ignorant in matters of law as before, while clerks and attorneys were now found who could not understand the old records. Owing, moreover, to the verbosity of English, more words were used in legal documents, to the great increase of the cost."